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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 /099 W
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P R 211205Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6373
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 0729

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CD
SUBJECT: INTERNAL ALIGNMENT IN SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL

SUMMARY: AS THE FIGHTING GOES SOUR FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF CHAD IN THE NORTH, THE INTERNAL ALIGNMENT WITHIN THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL IS BEGINNING TO POLARIZE. THIS POLARIZATION IS GENERALLY ALONG THE LINES OF AGE, WITH THE YOUNGER OFFICERS TAKING A MORE FORCEFUL STANCE AND THE OLDER A MORE CONSERVATIVE APPROACH. THESE LINES OF APPROACH APPLY TO INTERNAL POLITICS, NEGOTIATIONS, AND MILITARY TACTICS.

1. THE FIRST CLEAR SIGN OF THE EMERGING ALIGNMENT WAS THE DECISION NOT TO SEND FOREIGN MINISTER KAMOUGUE TO NIAMEY TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE LIBYANS. SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WERE SUPPORTED BY PRESIDENT MALLOUM, VICE PRESIDENT DJIME, AND MINISTER OF HEALTH DJOGO, EVEN THOUGH THEY DOUBTED IF ANYTHING POSITIVE WOULD COME FROM THEM; THEY WERE OPPOSED
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BY FOREIGN MINISTER KAMOUGUE, MINISTER OF EDUCATION GOUARA LASSOU, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE ROASNGAR, AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE MAHMOUD. (THE POSITION OF MINISTER OF WORKS ZAKARIA AND COMMANDER OF THE ARMY ODINGAR, THE OTHER TWO MEMBERS OF THE SMC, ARE UNKNOWN; BUT ONE OBVIOUSLY SIDED WITH THE KAMOUGUE FACTION WHICH CARRIED THE DAY BY A FIVE TO FOUR VOTE.) THE TWO GROUPS ARE BY NO MEANS HOMOGENIOUS; THE

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YOUNGER GROUP PARTICULARLY HAS ONLY ONE COMMON GOAL AND THAT IS TO STAY IN POWER FOR THE TIME BEING.

2. THE SPLIT HAD BEEN FORESHADOWED BY A SIMILAR DISAGREEMENT OVER MILITARY TACTICS IN WHICH THE OLDER GROUP WAS IN FAVOR OF EVACUWING THE GARRISONS FROM THE NORTH AS SOON AS AIR RE-SUPPLY BECAME IMPOSSIBLE, WHILE THE YOUNGER GROUP WANTED TO STAND AND FIGHT. (IN THIS DECISION, MINISTER ZAKARIA SIDED WITH THE YOUNGER GROUP, WHICH CARRIED THE DAY.)

3. THE GENERAL DIVISION HAD ALSO BEEN CLEAR IN THE STANCE TOWARDS NEGOTIATIONS WITH VARIOUS REBEL FACTIONS. IN THIS CASE, THE OLDER GROUP, WHICH WAS MORE READY TO GIVE CONCESSIONS TO THE REBELS, OUTVOTED THE YOUNGER GROUP WHICH TOOK A HARD-LINE STANCE.

4. SCAPEGOATS ARE NOW BEING SOUGHT FOR THE DEFEATS IN THE NORTH. ZAKARIA (THE ONLY PILOT) HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR HIS DIRECTION OF AIR OPERATIONS - ALTHOUGH NO ONE CAN CRITICIZE HIS PERSONAL BRAVERY. COMMANDER OF THE ARMY ODINGAR IS AN OBVIOUS TARGET IN VIEW OF THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF SOME ELEMENTS OF THE CHADIAN ARMY, BUT TO DATE NO ONE ELSE SEEMS TO WANT TO TAKE HIS PLACE.

5. AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE REPUTATION OF SOME MINISTERS
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IS FALLING, OTHERS SEEM TO BE RISING. VICE PRESIDENT DJIME'S HANDLING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE VARIOUS REBEL FACTIONS HAS ADDED TO HIS LUSTER AND MAKES IT CLEAR THAT HE IS THE MOST TRUSTED MEMBER OF THE SMC BY THE VARIOUS DISSIDENT GROUPS. GOUARA LASSOU (THE MOST RADICAL MEMBER OF THE SMC AND THE ONLY ONE WITH AN IDEOLOGICAL BENT), IS BASKING IN HIS QUOTE I TOLD YOU SO UNQUOTE ROLE ABOUT THE NON-APPEARANCE OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE. KAMOUGUE TOOK A BRIEF SWING AS COMMANDER OF THE TROOPS APPROACHING FAYA LARGEAU WHEN NEW FRENCH EQUIPMENT WAS ARRIVING, BUT WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT END UP AT THE HERO OF THE NORTH IN VIEW OF THE SLOW PROGRESS OF THE RELIEF COLUMN, HE RETURNED TO HIS DUTIES AS FOREIGN MINISTER. WITH THE FALLING OF ZAKARIA'S REPUTATION, MAHMOUD HAS BEEN EMERGING AS MOST INFLUENTIAL MOSLEM MEMBER OF SMC.

6. MALLOUM IS TIRED AND DISCOURAGED BUT IS STILL ACTING AS THE LINCHPIN OF THE DISPARATE GROUP. AS LONG AS THE KAMOUGUE FACTION CAN WORK ITS WILL THROUGH A CONSENSUS VOTE IN THE SMC, IONWILL PROBABLY NOT ATTEMPT TOPPLING IT. IN FACT, THERE ARE ADVANTAGES FOR THE KAMOUGUE GROUP IN LETTING MALLOUM TAKE THE BLAME OF THE PRESENT MILITARY FAILURES. HOWEVER,

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SHOULD NEGOTIATIONS WITH REBELS OR LIBYA CALL FOR TOO MANY CONCESSIONS, KAMOUGUE AND THE YOUNGER OFFICERS CAN BE EXPECTED TO MOVE AGAINST MALLOUM AND TAKE OVER CONTROL OF THE SMC. THE RESULTING GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MORE OVERTLY SOUTHERN DOMINATED, MORE FORCEFUL AND RADICAL, BUT ALSO MORE UNPREDICTABLE. IT WOULD NOT BE A DISASTER FOR U.S. RELATIONS WITH CHAD, BUT WOULD IN NO WAY HEAL THE INTERNAL DIVISIONS WITHIN CHAD.BRADFORD

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